THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) to (c) The Private/joint Venture companies have so far carried out a 2D seismic survey of 4758.7 LKM, 3D seismic survey of 14 sq. km. and drilled 7 wells in the exploration blocks so far. The amount spent by private/V.J. companies in these blocks till March, 1998 has been 88.68 million US dollor (excluding NOC share). Generally the progress of work has been satisfactory except some delays in the grant of exploration licenses and mining leases by some State Governments. The execution of work under the contracts, including those in the North-Eastern Region, is overseen by a Management Committee which includes representative of Government.

Agreement with Russia on Oil Exploration

1027. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India signed an agreement with Russia on oil exploration;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) when the results of exploration are likely to be expected?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) to (c) Protocols have been signed at the fifth meeting of the Indo-Russian Working Group on Cooperation in Oil and Gas held in Moscow in October, 1998 and during the fifth session of the Indo-Russian Inter-Governmental Commission held in Moscow in November, 1998. The two sides agreed to study the possibilities of joint exploration for hydrocarbon in Russia, India and third countries.

Development of Oil Fields by Private Companies

1028. SHRI K.M. SAIFULLAH: SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to award discovered oil fields for development to private companies;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the reasons for which the national oil companies cannot develop the fields themselves?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) Since 1992, Government has signed 17 contracts for development and production of discovered fields. Further 12 discovered fields have been awarded for private participation.

(b) and (c) Some of the reasons for awarding these fields for private participation are:

— The marginal economics of the fields;
— Considerable investment required;
— To augment production;
— To tide over the resource crunch;
— To obtain state of art technology.

Exploration of Oil from Cauvery Basin

1029. SHRI V.P. DURAISAMY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have started the exploration of oil and petroleum products for commercial purpose and domestic purpose from Cauvery basin in Tamil Nadu;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) and (b) As on 1.1.1999, ONGC has acquired 2808 Ground Line Kilometer (GLK) of refraction/single fold 2D data, 29791 GLK of multifold 2D data, 1049 SSK and 3861 GLK of 3D seismic data and drilled 296 exploratory wells (including 10 structural wells) and 36 development wells in Cauvery Onland basin. In addition, off the Tamil Nadu coast, under Exploration Bidding Rounds contracts have been signed for 2 blocks viz. CY-OS-90/1 and CY-OS/2 falling in Cauvery Offshore. The Contracts are under operation.

The Government has offered 4 blocks in offshore Cauvery basin under New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP). Additionally, 2 deepwater blocks, 1 in Cauvery basin offshore and 1 covering a part of Cauvery and Palar offshore basins have also been offered for exploration udner NELP.

The quantity of crude oil produced by ONGC from Cauvery basin during April 1998-January 1999 is 0.3064 Million Metric Tonnes.

As far as private/joint venture companies are concerned, the production of crude oil in Cauvery basin started in July 1997 from the exploration block CY-OS-90/1 (PY-3). The current rate of production from this field is about 1,000 tonnes per day.

(c) Does not arise.

Restructuring PSUs in Oil Sector

1030. SHRI RAGHAVJI:
PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a plan to restructure Public Sector Undertakings in the Oil Sector;

(b) whether P.M. while inaugrating Petroteck '99 recently in Delhi has announced restructuring of incentives to attract investment under New Exploration Licensing Policy, if so, the details in this regard; and

(c) what adequate precautionary measures to safeguard nation's interest are likely to be taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) The Government has constituted a Committee to look into the need of restructuring of some of the oil companies.

(b and (c) The incentives from time to time are being built into the phased dismantling of the administered price mechanism and tariff structure to attract investments consistent with the overall national priority and interests.

Increasing Oil Exploration

1031. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the acreage available under new exploration policy;

(b) how many parties internationally have shown interest under the new exploration policy; and

(c) how does Government plan to increase oil exploration during the next five years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) and (b) Under the New Exploration Licensing Policy, 48 exploration blocks measuring about 0.462 million sq. km. have been offered for bidding to both private sector and public sector companies on terms that provide a level playing field to investors.